



TALE WATERS THE VOICE OF THE NORTH ARKANSAS FLY FISHERS

July 14, 2020

NORTH ARKANSAS FLY FISHERS

Tale Waters

North Arkansas Fly Fishers meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month. Meetings are held at the Van Matre Senior Center located at 1101 Spring St Mountain Home, AR 72653. Membership meeting starts at 7:00 pm. All members and guests are welcome and encouraged to attend.

NAFF Board of Directors' meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month at 1:00 pm 1st Security Bank on 9th St. All members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Visit North Arkansas Fly Fishers
Online at

www.northarkansasflyfisher.org

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Tale Waters is published 2nd Tuesday of each month. Article deadline is 1st Tuesday of the month.

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The Guides Speak: Davy Wotton



In May we treated you to a chapter of Keith Campbell's upcoming book "Fly Fishing the White and Norfolk Rivers - The Guides Speak". This month we treat you to another chapter, the interview with Davy Wotton. In September we will present the interview with Dave Whitlock. We hope these chapters will whet your appetite to encourage you to buy a copy of the book! The book is to be published during the run-up to Sowbug 2021 (keep your fingers crossed!).

Keith has an ulterior motive for writing this book. He wants to raise money to support youth programs in Marion and Baxter Counties. The content of the book is the result of discussions that Keith had with Dale

Cont. Pg. 14

Travelling During the Pandemic



A DRIFTLESS BROOKIE

The earliest cases of COVID 19 in the US appear to have occurred north of Seattle WA, sometime in December 2019, based on antibody studies. By March 11, the World Health Organization declared a pandemic. Today we are in the midst of a world-wide pandemic with the US faring much worse than many other developed countries. The United States represents 4.2 percent of the world population; yet to date we have had 24.4 percent of documented cases and 24.2 percent of deaths in the world. Based on antibody studies the CDC estimates that there are ten times more cases in the US than have been documented. No question, this disease is endemic in our country.

Because this is a new virus, hence the name “novel corona virus”; scientists and medical experts have had to study, determine how best to prevent spread, and take care of those who have succumbed as the pandemic evolved. We learned that the virus is spread by droplets expelled from people’s mouths and noses as they speak, cough or sneeze. As these droplets “aerosolize” (into nearly microscopic droplets) they become more likely to spread. That is the reason masks and social distancing are so important to minimize the spread. We also know that the virus survives on surfaces for some period of time and can be spread by touching a contaminated surface and then touching your mouth, nose or eyes. Hence, the reason hand hygiene and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces are recommended by our health experts. We

Cont. Pg. 12



Fly Tying at Dally's (pre COVID-19)

July President's Message

As I write this it is July 4th, with little change in the Covid-19 issues. We are fortunate here in Baxter and Marion Counties that our infection rate is low. With that, I hope you are getting out enough to do some fishing. The lakes are still high and by all measures, decent wading on the White and Norfork River may not occur until October or later! Spring River is a wade option for trout; or if you have a boat, you are in luck on the rivers. Another option is our warm water species, in the creeks, rivers and still waters. We are fortunate to have options if you want to fish.

We have been in a collaboration with Dally's for the Friday afternoon fly tying held about 1:00pm until you are tired of tying. Thanks to Jim Dugan who he has provided some Nima's Pizza. Davy Wotton has given us some sage advice on tying and rigging in ad-

dition to information on the White from his vast experience. A good time is had by all. If you are free on a Friday afternoon, come in the shop and tie or just visit. We are always looking for good company and would love to have new tiers join us. Beginner tiers please come on by. If you are having difficulty with a particular fly or technique, we are glad to help and steer you in the right direction. If you want to learn a new fly, we will also be glad to help out. It is a blast to catch a fish on a fly you have tied!

Speaking of tying, if you have not seen our Facebook post, the 2020 Fly Tying Contest Winner Plate will be hung at Dally's for viewing until we decide when to hold an auction. Jerry Jester did a fantastic job on it. Thanks.

Tight Lines,
Dave Boyer



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Michael Schraeder

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Weather Cancellation Policy

NAFF Activities or Meeting will be cancelled or postponed when the Mountain Home Public Schools Cancel Classes.

Check KTLO radio website for school closing info.

Fly of the Month Pulsa Bugger



I doubt there is a trout fly angler who has not fished a wooly bugger and, in most cases, tied one as it is one of the flies most commonly used for the beginner fly tyers. No doubt for many use it as a “go to fly” when all else fails or simply a fly they have confidence to use.

More or less the wooly bugger is a woolly worm, which was at one time a very popular fly here for the White River, with an added marabou tail, that most certainly improves its attraction to the fish.

There are many variations of buggers by way of colors used but, in most cases, it amounts to a marabou tail, may be some tinsel flash added, a chenille body, possibly a rib, a wound palmered hackle and a beadhead.

Does color matter? In my opinion yes, albeit most are tied in shades of olive, which is overall a good general color to use. White at times for our rivers when shad are present.

The versions I prefer are a little different to that mentioned above as I will explain. Typically, a bead is attached to the hook before the

fly is tied. There’s nothing wrong with that other than you have a fixed weight factor. Granted in the case of fishing the fly you have options for different lines from dry to degrees of sink rate.

So, a method I have written about many times is this. Tie your fly without a bead. Carry with you an assortment of beads in different sizes and colors. Add the bead to you leader before you tie the fly on and it will cause the fly to act the same as if you had a bead on the hook. The difference is this-it will change the animated action of the fly. You can choose to fish in shallow water with no bead; or in deeper zones, add a bead of choice by weight and color, which can make difference at times. Believe me, it does!

This practice can also be applied to your nymph and worm patterns, add a choice of bead to the leader before you tie on the fly.

Even further if you are prepared to tie the Pulsa bugger as explained.

The materials required are as listed and color related to your choice of fly. My example is the tan version, which is good to imitate sculpins and crawdads.

Hook sizes - 10, 8, 6 and 4 but generally size 6 or 8 is best.

Bead - Your option with or without.

Marabou.

Flashabou tinsel.

Hares ear dubbing.

Ribbing tinsel.

Rooster hackle.

Grizzled Chickabou hackle.

Place hook in vice, run a thread wrap to bend of hook and back to about midway 2/3 shank toward the hook eye.

Marabou. I use the select plumes as I prefer the choice of length and do not have to tie in a stem as you would for the shorter strung marabou. It also produces a more mobile tail.

Start to build up laminations of the marabou tail working as you do with the thread toward the hook bend. This also gives you the choice to use different shades of marabou for the tail. Once you have secured the tail, cut off the excess material. I will have that measured and done before I tie the material in.

At the tail end, now add your strands of Flashabou and the ribbing material, which may be wire or French oval tinsel.

Body. I use Hare fur dubbing either natural shade or dyed depending on the colors of the fly chosen. The body is formed by a loop twist, which is simple to do.

First select your material and attach it to the thread as you would for a single thread dubbed method but not too tightly. Just form a nice roll around the thread. Hold the thread below the now dubbed

fur and take the thread up and over the hook shank and lock it by taking the thread around the now two strands of thread. This will form a dubbing loop. Now use your twister to spin the thread locking in the fur. Once done, start to form the fly body. If you do not have enough to complete the body, repeat the process. When done, select the hackle for the body. Ideally you want a hackle that has an arrow like taper, wide at the hook eye and tapering down to its tip end.

Before you wind the hackle fluff out the body dubbing. Now wind the hackle to the tail end and when there, reverse the ribbing tinsel through the hackle to the fly head. The faster you do this the less you will trap hackle fibers. Remove surplus hackle tail and ribbing wire. You may also at this time further pick out more of the dubbing with a dubbing needle.

Final stage is to select a grizzled chickabou hackle. This will be tied in by its tip end and wound to form a forward hackle.

Finally, go check out how your fly animates in the water. Add a 3mm bead to the leader near the fly and watch how it pulsates and moves, very unlike the more traditional bugger pattern.

Tight lines all!

Davy Wotton

Fame & Fortune!

You too can earn "Fame and Fortune" by contributing an article to the world famous NAFF newsletter, "Tale Waters". Simply send your article, as a Word document, to Mike Tipton (michaeltipton@centurytel.net). Fame and Fortune will follow.

Articles should be about fly fishing, fly tying, travel, or anything that you think might be of interest to NAFF members. A certain amount of literacy is expected, but we clean up grammar and spelling errors!



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Membership Report

A special thank you to Rusty Russell for your inclusion of a club donation with his membership renewal.

Thank you to the June/July/August renewals that were sent in this month. Hard copy reminders were just sent out to the remaining members coming due. Also thank you to the expired members that have renewed their membership this month. Lastly, it is a sad goodbye to the other eighty-six members that have not renewed this year bringing the club totals to 305 memberships and 438 members.

Paul Ashton

Membership



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Hope's Heartbeat

On a stellar Monday afternoon in June, I drove to Wildcat Access and parked my SUV in the last available slot. As I opened my hatch and grabbed waders and boots, I vaguely referenced a tall burly man sitting at a picnic table removing his gear. I sat down at the other table and began to pull on mine. As he walked by, he said with a snarl, "You're wasting yer time. I've tried every fly in my box and haven't caught a thang. My wife's down there fishing too and she's hasn't caught anything either."

Somewhat taken aback by his tone, I replied kindly, "Yes, I saw you taking off your waders." I'll just show you, I thought. But try as I might, I couldn't catch a "thang" either. I waded up and down the shoreline, tried multiple flies and met with no success. As the evening turned into dusk, however, the smell of bacon wafted across the river from a nearby resort. Visions of BLTs on fat Texas toast created a mouth-watering picture. I marveled at several herons that appeared, from a distance, taller than I am ... their signature long-legged strut always a strange sight. Just as the sun slid down the horizon, six squawking Canadian geese flew over my head ... so close I felt like I could reach them with my rod tip. And even though my gratitude didn't encompass any trout takes, nevertheless, I was blessed by this day away from worries about Covid 19 and the fears of the Pandemic. By that

point I felt a pang of regret for my negative thoughts about the man who failed to see such wonder and magic in this setting.

The next day I returned and did catch a small brown but nothing else. His size belied his strong fight and I was happy with his efforts. My trip was cut short, however, by a snarled tippet that made an eagle's nest look tidy. Deciding to quit, I still enjoyed the time I had along the riverbank. On the way back to the car, I was in the process of returning a phone call, when 2 men approached looking woebegone. Cancelling my call, I asked, "Can I help you?"

One said, "You look like someone in the know," to which I giggled. "We're here from Michigan staying at a resort up the road and need to know how to fish this place."

I began by telling them about the various entry points that I utilized and what flies to try. Then I said, "We used to own a resort and this is what we told our customers: we don't want to get in your pocket; but you might want to try a ..."

One of the men interrupted, "We know ... a guide. But we've checked with the local fly shop plus our resort people and all theirs are booked." The two gents shook their heads in disgust. "I knew we should have called a week ago and made arrangements."

I felt sorry for them and replied, "Let me give you the names of some guides we used to book and

phone numbers." I gave them one number, suggested some easily remembered guide websites; and then told them to use my name when they called.

"Will he take us to catch big fish?" One of the men asked.

"You need to tell him when you call, I responded. But it will depend on water levels, weather and a lot of things for him to do that."

Much happier, they left to go to their car to make the contacts. Maybe I'm just a sucker for people who need help; but we've all "been there" anxious to try out a new place without the proper info.

As I returned to my car, I decided that maybe it was no accident that I had to make an early departure. I'd done a good deed for some folks who needed some advice; and maybe after receiving that small act of kindness, they will decide to return to our little slice of heaven.

That night I reviewed the prediction for Wednesday's generation and was jazzed by the thoughts of minimum flow. Promising myself an early start, I packed my car and set my alarm extra early.

Wednesday I quickly drove to the access and discovered, to my delight, the prediction was true. I could hardly wait to hit the water. As I sat down to slip on waders, two teenage boys walked by and I said a hearty good morning. They responded with a polite greeting. They carried 2 kayaks, set them

down along the shoreline and returned to their pickup for life jackets. One stopped to talk as I strung my rod. "I envy you what you're doing," he said.

"How's that?" I said.

"Well you're going fly fishing and I can't fly fish from a kayak, he said. I'm gonna have to fish with regular lures today."

I giggled and retorted, "I can't fish out of a kayak either. I have to use it as transportation to get to a gravel bar or a spot I can get out and wade." We both commiserated about our shortcomings for a moment.

Then he said, "But I caught a 26" brown last night at Cotter Access on a black woolly!"

I put my hand over my heart and said, "Oh man I'm so jealous." He continued to tell me details and how long it fought; then turned to follow his buddy down to their kayaks.

As they reached their boats, I yelled in my best hillbilly accent, "I ain't yore Momma, but wear those life jackets instead of sittin' on 'em." They laughed; but as they paddled away, I was pleased to see the vests on their backs.

By this time, I was ready to go somewhat buoyed by an enjoyable conversation with two fine young men. I began to fish vowing to try some different flies and achieve more success than my other 2 days. I tried soft hackles and various other creations with no results. Then I remembered the

young fisher's suggestion. I tied on a black woolly with sparkle in the body and flash in the tail. I found a place where a large dark rock was visible in deeper water and two flat white rocks were embedded in the gravel. As soon as my fly drifted by the rock and into shallow water, a ferocious take rewarded me and I soon had a hefty thick rainbow in my net. The funny thing was, I'd done one of my "normal" operations and tied on an extra-long tippet. I would almost get the fish in and then he'd dart away with too much line to scoop him into my net. Finally I maneuvered him into lower water and made a dip and had him captured. I briefly admired and released him. Within a couple of more casts, I'd garnered his older brother, another stout fellow, with a passion for strong tugs and a brave heart.

By now, I was excited and stood in that same spot catching 5 more, some of the small stocker variety. In my zest, I missed another 7. Finally my aching back reminded me it was time to leave. So I took off for my car, thinking what a fine time I'd had and that I'd managed to last about an hour longer than I usually did. My husband pulled up in his truck to check on me. "I was getting worried," he said.

"I caught 7 fish and missed that many more, I said catching my breath. I'd have stayed longer but my back was hollering."

"Just as long as you're okay," he said and pulled away in his pickup.

On the short drive home, I pondered my 3 days on the river. Even though I was unsuccessful the first 2 days, I'd fellowshipped, helped others and given what I'd hoped was good advice. I was out of the house away from frightening statistics about the Pandemic. I'd enjoyed sparkling water, glorious sunshine and perfect weather. I reflected about the man from the first day, who thought it was all about catching fish. Instead the sights and sounds of the river are a gift God's given us to uplift our spirits and bring us hope. And cherishing those endowments is never a waste of time.

Rita Billbe



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We've all heard the old saying "One man's trash is another man's treasure." Well I guess that would hold true to what some would consider "trash fish" or rough fish as well. Fish that fall under this heading are typically less desirable to the majority of sport anglers. Carp are a typical example of what many anglers in the US would consider a "trash fish". This is certainly not the case in Europe however where they are a highly sought after game fish and also in Asia where they're an important food fish.

While carp will most likely never be very popular among conventional anglers, their popularity continues to grow among fly anglers. Hard fighting, challenging and widely distributed, these fish make an ideal quarry for the fly fisherman. They typically feed on slow moving prey, such as nymphs and crayfish, which can be imitated with flies and very effectively delivered with a fly rod!

Locally common carp can be found in good numbers in Crooked Creek, the Buffalo River, Bull Shoals and Norfolk Lake. Targeting actively feeding fish in shallow water with "buggy" looking bottom crawling flies will be most effective. Occasionally, however, carp will feed on or near the surface when there is cottonwood seed or mulberries. So having flies on hand that imitate these surface snacks can occasionally be useful as well!

Carp can be very spooky, so



stealthiness while wading/boating and casting is important. Fluorocarbon tippet, longer leaders and a soft(er) fly presentation can make a difference especially when chasing carp that get a lot of stuff thrown at them!

When it comes to flies, most fly fisherman already have a few patterns in their boxes that would work just fine to fool a carp. Larger mayfly nymphs, eggs, San Juan worms and crayfish imitations can all work well. But let me tell you, it wasn't until we opened our shop a few months ago and the fly catalogs started to arrive, that I realized how serious and creative many tyers have become. When it comes to tying effective, carp specific patterns for catching the "Golden Bonefish" "Bug-eyed", "leggy" flies like the Carp Tease, Carp Carrot and Ball Peen Craw are time proven flies that are willing and ready to get vacuumed up by "Ol' Mr. Rubber lips". So if the thought of getting acquainted with your backing while standing in a beautiful Ozark Creek sounds appealing, then strap on those wading shoes and test your skills against one of the hardest fighting fish that swims in freshwater!

Michael Schraeder

Spring River Report



Water levels are at 490 cfs and water clarity has been lightly stained. No rain in a few weeks has the river levels down. Still above average flow but it is very nice to see it finally start to get back down to normal levels.

Hot flies the last few weeks have been olive woolies and minnow patterns like the Guppie. During the heat of the day the bite will slow down. We have been doing only half days on guide trips with the heat. After lunch, when that sun starts bearing down, the trout go straight to the bottom. The bite early up to lunch has been great.

Saturdays have been busy with floaters. Through the week is the time to fish and Sunday is usually quiet. The river is very cold so get out and have a great time. And be safe!

Tight lines and good luck,

Mark Crawford

springriverfliesandguides.com



River Fishing Report



In the month of June we saw some fairly major fluctuation along with some more rain. We came close to seeing some major flood gate action with threats of 40k to 60K CFS of flows. Fortunately, that did not happen as it would have caused severe property damage on the river. The most we have ever seen is 50K CFS. So the lake levels are slowly dropping with the Bull at 691.39 and the Fork at 575.63. The Fork is generating 5k plus almost around the clock and Bull is 12k to 16K. The C.O.E. and SWPA are gonna make some big bucks this summer.

The Sulphur hatch also started in June. However, the bigger flows have a tendency to knock this hatch down. I. along with a few other guides, have had some great luck with John Schepps' wired PT. This is a fly he won a Sowbug tying contest with and it is a great fly for this time of year. Other PTs are also working. Of course, after a rain storm, the ubiquitous and highly productive San Juan worm in various colors such as brown, brown, and brown, along with the

Wapsi worm brown color are hard to beat. As the weather heats up, the girdle bug works well also. In fact my fisherman caught fish on it yesterday morning. This fly has become quite popular over the past few years and has Spanflex (Wapsi SX4-047) incorporated on to a 10 or 8 hook. This is a heavy fly generally tied with lead wrapped around it along with either a brass or tungsten bead 1/8th copper bead depending on how heavy one wants it to be. It is fished close to the bank and if you're not losing one every now and then then you're not close enough to the bank. Fish it with heavier tippet than you think you need because if the brown trout are on it, you will have a blast with this fly. It is also a pain in the you know what to tie; but it is now a must have fly for your box on bigger water. The depth of this fly can range from 3 or 4 feet to 4 to 8 feet. A dropper can even be used but expect to lose some flies.

Jimmy T.

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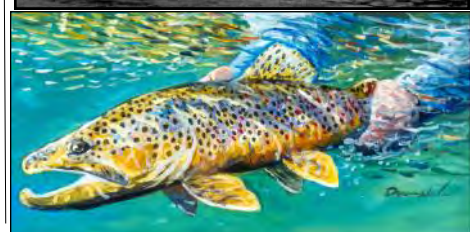

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Musings of a Fly Fishing Guide

"The Belgian Cast"

How many of you have used the Belgian Cast to deliver a tandem fly rig with added split shot when fishing high water? Or when swinging large articulated streamers with sinking line? Or even when fishing windy conditions along the salt-water coastal flats of the Atlantic Ocean? The Belgian Cast can make casting much easier in certain situations than the traditional back and forward style of casting; however, many anglers have never used the Belgian Cast, and some are unaware of its existence. If you haven't already added this casting technique to your casting repertoire, then you should.

The Belgian cast was first introduced to anglers in the United States by Albert Godart, a world-renowned Belgian fly caster who used the cast to win a silver medal in the 1958 World Championships for long distance casting. Albert was on a promotional tour to the United States when he introduced the cast to notable fly anglers Lee Wulff and Lefty Kreh. Lee and Lefty liked the cast so well, they started using it on many of their fly fishing trips. They promoted the cast as they traveled around the country giving casting



demonstrations. Unfortunately, the cast was not widely accepted or used by the American fly angling community. As the cast was introduced to the United States by a Belgian, it is often called the Belgian Cast, but there are many names associated with this cast, including the oval, elliptical or continuous-motion cast.

Our European angling friends actually call it the Austrian cast because it was an Austrian who actually invented the cast back in the 1930s. The Austrian who invented the cast, Hans Gebetsroither, was a shoemaker, river keeper and guide who would grease and dry his clients' silk lines every night to prepare them for fishing the next day. Hans found it easier and faster to dry the line by casting and moving the line in an oval or elliptical path instead

of using the traditional back and forward style of casting. The European fly fishing community embraced the cast and found that it had many other uses besides drying silk lines. Hans taught the cast to Albert Godart, the Belgian who brought the cast to the American fly angling community.

The Belgian or Austrian cast is a great cast to use when nymph fishing heavy flies, articulated streamers with sinking line, or fly fishing in windy conditions. You start your back cast by moving your rod tip out and to the side of your body, then continue by swinging your flies out and around behind you in a

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loop that is parallel to the water surface. Next, you move the flies upward in an oval or elliptical path. You'll finish the cast with a traditional overhead forward cast. Your fly line and flies are always moving away from you in a continuous motion, never stopping like they do with a traditional back cast. Keeping your flies constantly moving around you throughout the back cast, then making a forward cast is what makes this cast so successful. If you are right handed, you will start the cast with a sidearm motion to the right, or if there is a person to the right of you, move the rod across your chest to swing the loop to the left and behind you. This casting style eliminates the need to wait on your fly line, leader, and flies to unfold and come to a stop before you start your forward cast which can cause a tangled mess of fly line, leader, and flies. There is no stop and start or delay when using the Belgian cast, only a continuous motion of moving fly line, leader, and flies through the air, which results in a much smoother cast.

The Belgian cast has become my go-to cast when fishing high water conditions. I use it to deliver heavy fly patterns on long leaders with a lot of split shot. If you are one of those big streamer gurus, or just someone

out fishing on a windy day, then the Belgian cast is the one cast you need to learn and put to use. If you have never used the Belgian cast, give it a try! I think you will be pleasantly surprised by how well it works.

Danny Barker

**Don't Forget!
Fly Tying
Every Friday
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Fly Tying at Dally's (pre COVID-19)



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GUIDED TRIPS/OUTFITTERS/INSTRUCTOR

Fly Tying Tip Split Thread Dubbing

A while back, Dally's featured Davy Wotton in a video doing his SLF Trans Caddis. I was mesmerized with a slick little technique on split thread dubbing. After splitting your thread to form a dubbing loop, you then have to spin the thread/bobbin holder to create the dubbing rope. Davy does it one step better for a buggy rope for those small nymphs.

If you do not know, Davy Wotton is a man of many talents. He has tied commercially, developed many of the dubbings we use through Wapsi, developed the ADavy and Double Davy Knots used as terminal knots and is an accomplished guide on our local rivers. He has several short cuts and other techniques while tying.

One of those is to split your thread as you normally would (photo #1) and insert your dubbing material. Second is to pull out about 12 inches of thread from the bobbin (photo #2). Then take your thumb on top of the thread at the tip of the bobbin holder and push on the thread while moving your thumb toward the dubbing (photo#3) ... MAGIC. The thread twists the dubbing into your rope. While holding the thread with your thumb (and finger if needed),

spool up the extra thread back on your bobbin holder and wind your rope onto the hook shank.

You can see Davy do this on the linked video tying his SLF Trans Caddis. The technique also shows up best at the end of the clip as he demonstrates it again: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7IuIbH-TEtQ&feature=youtu.be>

Davy has been coming to our Friday afternoon tying sessions at Dally's passing on sage advice. I have learned a lot. So come on by and visit. You never know what you might pick up.

Dave Boyer



PHOTO 1

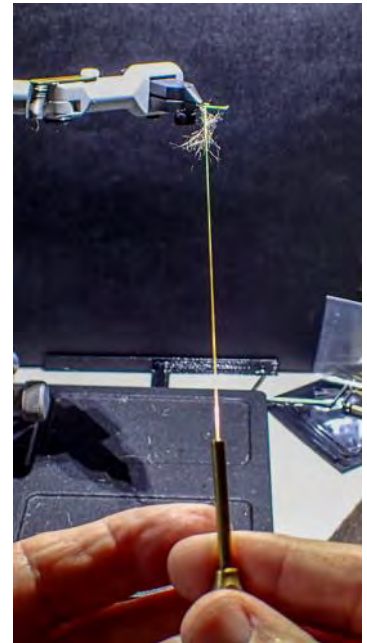


PHOTO 2



PHOTO 3



Boyd Rod Company - Harry Boyd, Maker

Boyd Rod Company
Custom Bamboo Fly Rods

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"In our family, there was no clear line between religion and flyfishing."
Norman Maclean

also know that people can be infected but asymptomatic, thus unknowingly spreading the virus.

My husband Steve and I had previously planned a trip to fly fish in the driftless area of Minnesota and Wisconsin this Spring, but that trip was cancelled because of the pandemic. In fact, we were specifically asked NOT to visit Wisconsin by the owner of the fly shop in Viroqua, WI where we had planned to stay.

While we are all suffering from "Covid fatigue" and want to get out, socialize and travel, health experts warn against it. The virus is prevalent in our environment, more so than may be obvious, so traveling brings inherent risks. But for various reasons we may need to travel, and, in that instance, there are measures one can employ to diminish the risks. I had to travel for health reasons twice to Minnesota over the last two months and was able to take steps to avoid contracting Covid 19. I made the first trip alone and Steve accompanied me on the second.

The important thing to keep in mind while traveling is to identify specifically where the risk is higher and how to diminish it. Places like gas stations, convenience stores and rest stops have a high volume of traffic, so are good places to pick up the virus. How proactive you are at diminishing your risk is up to you; it is one thing

you can control. Below are some tips we used to return home healthy.

People: In general, the best mindset is to assume everyone is infected. In any facility keep at least six feet away from others as much as possible. Though not my usual practice, I no longer hold the door for people as they exit or enter a building or restroom. I let them pass thru and then do so myself when the way is clear. If there is not room to social distance in a restroom I wait outside the door and inform others that I am waiting in line. I found sometimes people stood too close to me while waiting, so I kindly asked them to social distance. I sometimes would tell people that they may want to do so because I had traveled outside the US (a true statement, I just did not share with them that it has been years). It was entertaining to see how they would take a big step back, and with my mask on they could not see that I was smiling (laughing) at their response. These days it may be more effective to say that you have been in Florida or Houston, sadly. Unfortunately, this is only effective if people are up on COVID-19 current events.

Hand Sanitizer: Though not as effective as soap and water, this is an essential travel item. We keep a bottle in our vehicles and use it when we get back into the car.

Even if you have washed your hands during a stop you should still disinfect your hands in case you touched a door handle or other item after you washed them. You can also use the sanitizer on the door handle, steering wheel and gear shift of your vehicle. You could also consider keeping a jug of water, soap and paper towels in your vehicle for washing your hands.

Gas pumps: The pump, having been touched by many hands is a great place to be exposed to Covid. We put our masks on first, then touched the pump to fill our tank. Do not make the mistake of pumping the gas, then handling your mask with your now dirty hands. After filling our tank, we went directly into the restroom to wash our hands.

Door handles: Another dirty item. Avoid touching them if you can. Use your body to push doors open when possible and wash your hands if you touch the door or handle. Luckily many facilities have a door you can push to open, particularly to exit, so you often do not need to touch a door to exit a facility where you have just washed your hands.

Disinfectant: We carried sanitizing wipes with us and disinfected the surface of items we purchased while on the road, as we do at home. This includes items purchased at convenience and grocery

stores. A spray bottle filled with 0.4% hydrogen peroxide and paper towels also does the trick. To make the 0.4% solution use one-part standard hydrogen peroxide (3%) to seven parts water.

Hotels/ Accommodations: For overnight stops on the road we choose stops in towns with a low incidence of Covid 19; smaller towns or suburbs, typically. Though hotels are deep cleaning rooms, I still feel more comfortable wiping down frequently touched and hard surfaces myself. Doorknobs, TV remotes, light switches, bathroom fixtures, coffee pots, microwaves and tops of furniture. We stayed in hotels with fully stocked kitchenettes, so I put all the dishes, utensils and glasses in the dishwasher when we arrived.

On our second trip to MN, we were there for over a week, so we rented a vacation rental home. Though it was a bit of work, once we had the place disinfected, we felt safe. In that instance we used 0.4 % hydrogen peroxide spray to avoid depleting our supply of disinfectant wipes. Many vacation rental sites now require the location to be vacant for three days between rentals, which is another advantage of them.

Food: We did not eat in restaurants, but did order food to take out, as we do at home. We transfer the food to our clean dishes,

then throw away the containers, disinfect the surface the containers touched then wash our hands before eating. While on the road is useful to bring your own dishes and utensils. Disposable ones make it easy.



The silver lining in all this was that Steve was able to fish in the driftless area of Minnesota when he accompanied me, and the fishing experience was not really any different from years past. Using funds generated from the trout stamp program, the MN DNR has purchased easements through private lands for anglers to access streams. There are many small streams with easy access and little pressure. Most people who arrive at an access point, if they find another angler is already present, will just go down the road to the next access or to another stream all together. The vast majority of fish are wild, small and wary, so stealth and good technique are required to succeed at catching them. Don't expect to catch a lot of fish or monsters; most fish are six to ten inches while a twelve incher is

notable. But the small meandering streams through rolling hills and bluffs offer peace, solitude and fresh air. If you are lucky enough to get into, and match, a hatch of midges, may flies or caddis, fun times where you can do no wrong can be had. Terrestrials can be great fun in the summer and early fall. Browns and Brookies are the most common species, but there are also some stocked rainbows in a few streams as well as splakes.

It is simply best to avoid travel during COVID-19. However, you can take a variety of actions that will greatly reduce your probability of being exposed. Moreover, unlike going to an indoor concert or college party, fishing by its very nature is much lower risk, and easy to socially distance. Stay at home or stay safe as you travel.

Susan Parsons



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Fulton before Dale's passing. Steve Wright's book was often mentioned during the discussions. Last summer Keith presented his idea and an early sample of the book to the NAFF Board of Directors. Keith was looking for financial and moral support from NAFF. We estimate that printing 500 copies of the book will cost between \$2000 and \$3000. Keith has pledged \$500 of his own money to support the cost of printing. NAFF agreed to provide some support for the cost of printing and no particular amount was committed. We would wait to see how the book developed and review our commitment this year. The cancellation of Sowbug seriously dented our capability to provide financial support for much beyond our current commitments for scholarships. We, Keith and NAFF, are looking for others willing to help sponsor the printing of the book. We would like to have the book printed and ready to put into people's hands by Sowbug 2021. We expect that the book will retail for \$20.00. All proceeds from the sale of the book (excluding setting back money for the second printing) will go towards youth programs in Marion and Baxter Counties, with a preference for programs that involve fly fishing. Neither Keith, the guides interviewed, nor NAFF will get any money from the sales. If you would like to make a pledge to sponsor the first printing of the book or pre-order a copy (\$20), contact Mike Tipton 870-404-

8845 or michael.tipton@centurytel.net

Davy Wotton

MY GUIDING

I guide about 80% of the time on the White River, about 15% on the Norfork River, and then occasionally on other rivers. And there's a reason for that. We have much more resource on the White River than we do on the others. So, we can pick a section of the 100 miles of the White River to focus on for any particular day.

I was raised in Wales and England. Obviously, coming from where fly fishing has its roots going back hundreds of years, there are a lot of techniques of fly fishing not known here, which to some extent I was indoctrinated with years ago. I like to teach people techniques of fishing that are what fly fishing is all about but that are not very common here. The European style of fishing traditionally would be the wet fly style of fishing. This is a very effective way of catching fish once you understand how to do it. The problem for the majority of anglers, if the truth be known, is that they don't have the fundamental skills to be able to do it. The main difference between Europe and here is that fly fishermen are generally much more skilled in Europe. One of the reasons is that they don't have rivers and streams that are stocked with hundreds of

thousands of trout. They are fishing for essentially wild brown trout, and they are not going to go out and catch 20, 30, 50 fish a day. That's unheard of. On a really good day, they might catch half a dozen fish. So, to catch these fish, the skill has to be that much better. In comparison, in waters here in the United States where they are heavily stocked, the fish are pretty easy to catch.

I learned these traditional techniques back in the 1950s. I was fortunate to learn from some old-timers who fished in the traditional manner. At that time, where I was raised, the traditional approach to fly fishing was how people fly fished. So, I learned this approach when I was young. This traditional approach forces you to develop higher levels of skill.

A TYPICAL DAY ON THE WATER

I work with some people who have zero skill, who have never fly fished in their life. I also work with people who have some fly fishing experience, and I also work with people who have a high skill level. Within five minutes, I can tell what their skill level is going to be. Their overall skill level almost always relates to their casting skill. It's very simple. If you don't have good casting skills, then everything else you do is not going to work as well as it should. So, a typical day

on the water with me depends on the skill level of my clients. I build the fishing day around them.

If you take an average year, probably 75% of my guiding would be out of a boat. I would like to see more wadable water. But for people with limited fly fishing skills, it's a little bit easier for them fishing from a boat compared to wade fishing. Fishing with a nymph using a strike indicator is a lot easier from a boat because you can have a 100-yard drift from a boat. But other techniques have better application when you are wade fishing. For example, traditional wet fly fishing, European nymph style fishing, dry fly fishing, those have better application to wade fishing rather than drifting from a boat. That's not to say they don't work from a boat, they do. But wade fishing works better.

HOW I GOT STARTED IN GUIDING

I started a mail order business in the late 1960s selling flies and fly tying materials in the United Kingdom. I was also asked to write a regular column in a national fly fishing publication which got me nationally known in the UK. After which I was often asked to give programs to fly fishing clubs and give on-stream demonstrations of fly fishing techniques in the UK. One reason I became a guide is that I got to be known as a damn good fisherman on the rivers I fished. So, people would want to know how I used what flies, and they would hire me to take them out on the river and show them

the techniques. So, that's how I got started in guiding. My first guiding was in the 1970s, in a lot of different places over there in the UK.

I first visited the U.S. in about 1974. The reason I came over here is that I used to buy some fly tying materials from some companies over here. Over here, I was able to buy genetic capes, which were not sold in the UK. So, when I was here on business, I had the opportunity to fish some of the rivers that I had been reading about, such as the Madison.

I didn't start guiding over here until about 1994. At that time, I lived in Illinois. I was going back and forth between the U.S. and the U.K. I owned a factory over there that developed and manufactured SLF dubbing. It was the largest dubbing factory in the world. So, when I was living in Illinois, I would fly fish and guide in Wisconsin. At that time, I would also visit and fish with Dave Whitlock here in the Mountain Home area.

Most of the guides who are here today weren't around when I started guiding. The fly fishing guides who were here when I started were John Gulley, Steve Nelson, Dale Fulton, Fox Statler, Jim Lipscomb, and a couple others whose names I don't remember.

WADE FISHING VS BOAT FISHING

Wade fishing or boat fishing, the answer to that is very easy. It all depends on what the water allows

you to do. If I have low flows that allow wade fishing, the day may be spent 50-50. I find the section of river that allows us options if the water is low enough. But some people don't want to wade fish. They prefer to stay in the boat.

THE MOVEMENT OF TROUT

Big brown trout may move miles in their daily wanderings, but not rainbows. Brown trout still retain a lot of their natural instincts, partly because they haven't been over-cultured in hatcheries. Brown trout, by their very nature, will forage for food. They have an incredible sense of smell. They can smell food items way, way upstream, such as crawdads when they're in a stage of molting from the hard to the soft shell. I have watched brown trout root around in the weed beds for the crawdads and sculpins. Rainbows won't do that. Rainbows, even wild rainbows, prefer to have their food brought to them by the current. So, the rainbows will be found in those areas where the current forces the food source into a seam in the river.

When a brown trout has an urge to feed, he is willing to go a long way to find food. He has an acute sense of smell and sight. Brown trout eyes are much better conditioned to diminished light, in contrast to a rainbow trout. Rainbow trout normally don't feed significantly in diminished light conditions, but brown trout do. That's why, at times, you'll catch better quality browns in the hours of

darkness compared to the daytime. Another factor is that invertebrates are more active in the hours of diminished light, and if the small bugs are active, then so are the sculpins.

The main things that cause rainbows to move are the conditions of water temperature and changes in the water flow. If the water flow changes from high water with several generators running to minimum flow, then the rainbows have to move. On high water, they tend to get moved downstream more than upstream. Whereas brown trout, although subjected to the same change in water, are different. The way they choose to find themselves in a resting lie is a little different from rainbows. A brown trout may be comfortable in a resting lie in 6 inches of water. A lot of times those browns will sit in only six inches of water as long as they have shade. They don't like bright light. On the White River, you'll see them where you have grass overhanging a gravel bar. Those browns will be tucked right up against the bank in just 6 inches of water because they have shade from the grass. Whereas rainbows will tend to look for areas of water movement. The moving water contains more oxygen, and also more food that is being channeled toward them.

Before minimum flow there was sometimes no generation for weeks and weeks. That was a disaster for that river. Fish were dying

because of high water temperatures downstream. I have checked water temperature below Rim Shoals that was nearly 80°. I am a strong supporter of minimum flow. The increased water is beneficial for the fishery. Some people complain about minimum flow because they can't wade fish from the same spots that they used to fish from. It seems that all they care about is their own self-interest and their access to wade fishing spots.

MISTAKES I SEE MY CLIENTS MAKE

The absolute number one issue is inability to cast. Many people have never had good instruction in the first place, and they've developed the most hideous faults in their casting, which have become ingrained. When something becomes subconscious in your memory, you don't think much about what you're doing. And it's very difficult to change that. So, guides have a limitation with what they can do with anglers based on their ability. Very quickly, as a guide, you have to make an assessment of the client's ability because that tells us what we can do for the rest of the day with that client. And if they have issues with casting, I can guarantee you that they will have issues with controlling their fly line as they try to maintain drifts. Having the line on the water is one thing, but how you control that drift is another. And

that takes a lot of experience to be able to do that right. The more you can maintain an acceptable drift, the more likely that fish will be caught.

Another problem is lack of knowledge for how to build a system to fish. Not only can some customers not put together a nymph rig, but some can't even tie a knot. A lot of guiding is doing for people what they can't do for themselves. Whatever the skill level of the client is, whether low or high, I try to enhance that skill level through their time with me. Their ability determines what I can do on any given day with them.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVEN'T FISHED HERE

It's very simple. I would tell them that if they want to maximize their ability to catch fish in the river, they better hire a guide for a few hours at least. If they want to come here blind, fine. They may catch a few fish. But if they don't really have knowledge of the places to go, the best techniques to use, the best flies to use in those situations, how to rig everything up, then a guide could be very helpful. I've had people come here, fish for two days, and not catch a fish. And then they call me and ask if I could take them out for a few hours. And I say sure, but I tell them that they should have

hooked up with me at the beginning of their trip. This idea applies to any river, not just this river.

THE DANGER OF GENERATOR FLOW

The one thing people have to understand on this river system is awareness. It's as simple as that. You need to know what the Corp of Engineers intends to do or has done. If they turn big water on at 12:00 midnight, it obviously takes a certain amount of time for the water to move downstream. So, a fisherman calls the dam and is told that they are running minimum flow. So, although there may be no flow at the dam, there may be big water downstream. So, you have to understand that wherever you fish on this river system, you have to consider the possibility of changing water levels and speed. The key answer to your question is that you have to have knowledge and awareness of changing water levels. More people get into trouble on the Norfolk River these days than on the White River. The water on the Norfolk comes up so quickly.

USING GENERATOR FLOW TO CATCH MORE FISH

The rising water increases food sources being disturbed off the bottom of the river and washes them downstream. Sowbugs and scuds are examples. The rise of water generally increases fish activ-

ity. In addition to more food being dislodged, the increase in oxygen from the increased water flow increases fish activity. But fish generally don't like falling water. If it is a slow decrease in water flow, the fish don't mind that nearly as much as a quick decrease in water flow. When that water drops, the comfort zone for the fish is no longer there. They are less likely to feed in these situations. There is also a problem with quickly rising water because that water kicks up so much debris that on the edge of that rising water, it may be unfishable.

MY PREFERRED GENERATOR FLOW WHEN FISHING FROM A BOAT

Anywhere between 4000 and 8000 CFS. Because it provides more resources for fish habitat, it keeps the fish more active, and they are looking for food. The optimum temperature for the river is between 55 and 65 degrees. But that temperature varies depending on several factors. One is the temperature of the water coming out of the lake, and another factor is how much heat from the sun the water in the river is absorbing. During long periods of low water, the river is absorbing a lot of heat. That said, a guide has to adapt to generation levels that can increase flows to as much as 25,000 CFS and accordingly adjust to effective techniques such as deep water nymph rigs or streamers.

THE TYPE OF BOAT THAT

WORKS HERE

What boat will work or not work in this river partly depends on what water flow we have. For example, with minimum flow, you need a boat that is capable of running over some pretty skinny water. You also have to have some sense about how to navigate that boat. It's actually more difficult to navigate your boat when you're going downstream compared with when you're going upstream because when you go upstream you can better see what's in front of you. When you're going downstream, it is more difficult to see submerged rocks because it's more difficult to see the surface disturbance.

You really can't beat the type of boats that we use which have a shallow draft. The flat bottom boats are the best.

In high water, I've seen people out there on the White River in their \$80,000 bass boat. Do I think they make any sense on the river? Absolutely not, because they had to pound up that river with their 200 horse motor, and the wake wash coming across to other people in their boats is very, very unsettling, and the wake wash to the shore creates erosion.

That's one of the reasons I don't like jet motors. I will never use one. Because they create so much wake wash when they pound up the river, and disturb resting lies and feeding fish, not to mention the disturbance to other anglers

whether they are wading or boat drifting. Also, you have less control with a jet motor than you do with a prop motor. If you have a jet motor, you have to also use oars for drifting while the client fishes. With the prop motor, I can control the boat and keep it at the correct angle for my client to fish as the boat is drifting. But you can't do that with a jet motor.

MY BOATS

When I first came here, I had a couple of the old original Shawnees. They are great boats. You can beat the heck out of those damned things and they'll stand up to it. I still have one. Right now, I have a fairly new Shawnee that was custom-built to my specifications.

On low water, I prefer a 15 hp, but I am comfortable using the new 20 hp 4 stroke motor. The revolutions of the prop are slower, and you can idle that motor like a snail. On the big water, I use a 25 hp. The motor I use is based on water flow. To position the boat parallel to the shore for a good drift, I generally use the motor to control the drift, but sometimes I use the oars.

MY FAVORITE FLIES

The White Tail Midge pattern is one that I developed years ago

back in the U.K. It has a white marabou tail that represents the chordal fin of the naturals, which they use to swim. A lot of flies that are available in fly shops, I developed those patterns, the same as Dave Whitlock did. They are commercially produced by other companies, and they pay us a royalty.

You need only 10 flies to catch 90% of the fish on this river.

Here is my general choice for 10 flies for the White River I would not be without. Bear in mind flies would be in different sizes.

1. White Tail Midges, various colors
2. San Juan Worms, various colors
3. Hare's Ear Nymph, gold bead head
4. Eggs, orange
5. Partridge and Hare's Ear soft hackle
6. Silver Invicta
7. Muddler Daddy
8. DW Caddis Emergers
9. Olive/gold Wooly Bugger
10. Zoo Cougar.

IF YOU WANT TO CATCH BIG FISH AND DON'T CARE ABOUT NUMBERS

All you can do is fish methods that would normally catch the big fish. But there is no guarantee on any particular day that big fish will be caught. If they are running big water, which is forcing fish close to the shores, maybe fishing streamers thrown to the bank would be the best option, or hoppers and big dries. If they are running low water, the odds of that working are less likely. When the water is lower, the flow rate is slower. The fish are much more wary. In slow water, the fish have all the time in the world to look at what they're about to eat. Not only that, but they have more ability to be aware of their surroundings such as shadows and boats. Don't forget that the trout are going to be downstream from you, and so sometimes they are simply gone before you get there. Generally, low water is not a good time to catch big fish. If you go out early in the morning and late in the evening when there is less light, you put the odds a little more in your favor.

To answer your question, if people want to target big fish, you might sling big streamers all day for one fish, and you might not catch anything. Most people would like to catch something as they are fishing for big browns. To catch big trout, you need to be on the water when

the conditions are right.

One interesting point is that the majority of big trout that I have seen caught, or that I have caught myself, have been on small flies. So one good approach to trying to catch big trout is to use small flies, which also allows other fish to be caught. I have seen many big browns caught on that White Tailed Midge. If there is a shad kill coming through the generators, then a shad pattern is an excellent fly to catch big browns.

IF YOU WANT TO CATCH A LOT OF FISH AND DON'T CARE ABOUT SIZE

Nymphs would be what to use. The White Tailed Midge, in combination with a Hare's Ear Nymph or a San Juan Worm would be a good choice. Or you may choose to fish soft hackles and wet flies, or small streamers. If you have low water, the fish are very wary, and you're not going to get away with fishing big flies. You will need to fish smaller flies on lighter tippet, 5X or 6X tippet, and size 14, 16, or 18 hooks, maybe sometimes even as small as 20 and 22.

IF I HAD ONLY ONE FLY

Summer: If the water is low, a size 16 black White Tail Midge. If the water is high, a tan San Juan Worm.

Winter: It depends on the water. That's a big part of it. If there were higher flows of water, I would use a size 14 red San Juan Worm. If it was low flow, I would use a size 14 black and silver White Tail Midge.

MY PREFEREED KNOT FOR TYING MY FLY TO THE TIPP P E T

A Davy Knot. It's very easy. I developed that knot when I was a kid back in the 1950s. That was the only way I could figure out how to tie a fly onto a tippet.

WEIGHT-FORWARD VS DOUBLE TAPERED LINES

Weight-forward lines do one thing for a person who can't cast. They make the cast easier because there is a physical weight at the end of the line. A double taper line usually takes more technique and skill. However, the difference between the two lines in their practical use is significant. There is far more control of the line with a double taper than there is with a weight-forward line. The reason is that on a weight-forward line, you are unable to move the heavier tipped line when it is on the water as easily as you can the light tip on a double taper line.

With the exception of throwing streamers or heavyweight flies, or deep-water nymphing, pretty much all other fishing is done better with the double taper line. When

you're fishing lower flow water, for example dry fly fishing, or nymph fishing, or traditional wet fly fishing, you cannot beat a double taper line.

IMPROVING THE FUNCTION OF OUR FLY LINE

By the way, another mistake I see from people who fly fish is that they use a floating line that is floating "in" the water rather than "on top of" the water. If your line is not on top of the water, then it is impossible to make an effective mend in the line. I have had brand new fly lines that don't float the way they should float. We should be treating our floating fly lines. And the only product I use for this is Mucilin in the green container.

There are some important things you should do with your line. First, stretch your line. They actually start to shrink. People don't believe that, but it's true. You either use a friend or a vehicle. You get your friend to hold one end of the line, and you walk back 40 or 50 feet and pull. I'll guarantee that you walk another three or four yards back as the line stretches. You should do this every time before you fish. The line can contract overnight. After you do this, your line will cast infinitely better. Unstretched line is rougher, and it goes through the eyes of the rod with more friction. In addition, it

is more difficult to mend that line because it won't lay straight if it is not stretched. The stretching reduces the coiling, which makes it easier for us to control the line.

Second, the line should be treated periodically while you are fishing. You should use green Mucilin. Right before you start fishing, if you are using floating line, you should pull at least the first 10 or 15 feet off of your reel and apply the Mucilin to your line. Then also treat the line periodically while you are fishing. The only downside to Mucilin is that when it gets hot, it leaks out of the container. So, you have to keep it cool.

I might mention that I am against loop-to-loop connections. Every time you connect a junction in the line, you create a hinge in it. With a loop-to-loop connection, you don't get a consistent flow through of line. Knots are not a problem, but loops are. The best knots to make the connection of fly line to leader are those that have a small size knot connection, which are a snood knot, a needle knot, and a Whitlock No Knot.

THE COLOR OF A FLY LINE

Another interesting thing is that my preference is to use white lines. The reason is that you can always see a white line. Some people say

white lines spook fish. Well, bullshit. Any line will create a shadow when on the water. If that shadow is seen by a fish coming toward the line, they will spook. The argument that the color of the line is what spooks fish is bullshit. What spooks fish is what you do with the line.

Sometimes my client will be fishing with a dark line. I will tell my client to mend his line, and he tells me that he can't see his line. Well if he was using a white line, I'll guarantee that he would be able to see it. With a long leader, say 15 feet, fishing a white line will cause no problem.

LEADERS

When I first started fishing as a kid, I had no knowledge of commercially produced tapered leaders. So, what I got was some nylon or sometimes it was gut. People would build their own tapered leaders. They would sometimes use up to 10 sections of decreasing diameter gut to build their leaders. When monofilament became available, you didn't have to mess with that gut.

Today, I rarely use commercially produced tapered leaders because I build my leader systems the way I want them. I'm not saying commercially produced tapered leaders have no use because they do have

use. But commercially produced tapered leaders can also be a disadvantage sometimes, particularly with deeper water nymph fishing techniques like we use on this river. You need a continuous section that is a fine diameter from a short butt section. To get the leader down quickly, as for nymph fishing, you want the entire leader that will be under water to be of the same small diameter. A fine leader will require less weight to get the fly down, whereas a thicker leader will require more weight.

When I tie my leaders, I average between 3 to 5 feet of decreasing diameter for the butt section from the fly line, in other words 3 foot, 2 foot, 1 foot (20 lb., 15 lb., 10 lb.), and then add continuous fine line onto the end of that for nymph fishing.

By the way, fly fishermen pay up the ass for things they don't need. If you go to a fly shop, you can pay \$5 for a tapered leader, and if you go to Walmart, you can buy a Cortland tapered leader for a \$1.50. And the leader you buy at Walmart is excellent quality. You can pay \$130 for a fly line at a fly fishing shop, but you can spend only about \$20 at Walmart for a very good fly line. It is nonsense to pay the higher prices. Spools of tippet is another racket in the fly fishing business. You're paying for convenience to have a small spool. \$35 for a 30-meter spool of tippet,

that's ridiculous. I use bulk spools of line that I buy from mainline stores. 200 meters for \$20. There is expensive tippet that is very good, having great knot strength. But is it necessary to buy that expensive tippet? Absolutely not, unless I require ultrafine tippet in 6X or less.

Also, I might mention that for the leaders that I tie, I use the brand of clear monofilament called Amnesia for the butt section. This monofilament has an oval profile, not a round profile. Since it is oval, it will not twist as much. I go from 20 pound to 15 pound to 10 pound, and then I attach my leader and tippet. The length of the butt section depends on what type of fishing I do. The butt section might be three, four, five, or six feet long.

The only time I use a commercially produced tapered leader is when I am fishing micro dry flies, and I use this with a double tapered line. That continuous taper gives a better turnover.

HOW OUR CAST INFLUENCES OUR FLY LINE AND LEADER

One of the things that causes leader systems to twist is when the person casting rotates the rod as a part of the cast instead of tracking in a straight line. The cast can actually create twist in the fly line. It doesn't matter if you are casting

directly overhead or to the side. What does matter is that your fly line tracks in a straight line. Your cast can be at an angle, but the forward and backward movement of the rod must all be in one plane.

One of the problems with commercially produced tapered leaders is that they coil and it's very difficult to keep them straight. If you work them with your hands, you can get them straightened out, but it's a pain in the ass. You can't facilitate a straight-line cast if the leader has coils in it.

If a person rotates the rod on every cast, which creates twist in the line and the leader, then the only way to get that twist out is to untwist the line. If this doesn't happen, then when a fish is caught, tangles in the line can occur that interfere with the line going through the eyes of the rod. When a customer of mine has a cast that is not in one plane, we need to occasionally remove the twist from the line. One approach is to extend the line behind the boat. Another way is to cast the line in the air but rotate the rod in the direction opposite of the rotation that caused the twist.

TRADITIONAL WET FLY FISHING

The evolution of the wet fly was

well established in the British Isles a few hundred years ago, which included the countries of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Many variations of wet fly patterns evolved largely related to the uniqueness of the fishable waters, the food sources found in those systems, the availability of natural fur and feather sources, and the ability of the fly tyers at that time. Those flies all evolved for the catching of wild browns, sea run browns and Atlantic salmon.

The traditional method of fishing winged wet flies is very different from the way most people fish wet flies on the White River. When I arrived here, I knew of no one who had any idea about how to fish wet flies in the traditional British manner, and that is still largely true today. Although some fly fishers here fish soft hackles using an across and downstream swing, the skills of traditional wet fly fishing involve much more than that.

When I first came here to fish the White River system, I was astounded to see how anglers nymph fished with indicators. That was not how we fished in the UK. We nymph fish with a suspended fly. The use of floats, as they are known in the EU, were and largely still are restricted to fishing for coarse fish.

Historically, wet fly anglers in the

UK would use spliced wooden rods as long as 20 feet. Attached to the rod tip would be a line used to fish a single fly or a combination of up to six flies spaced apart on detached droppers. The flies were presented at all angles to the stream or lake, using by and large a switch cast to change direction.

I knew based on my lifetime of fly fishing for trout in the UK and other waters around the world that traditional wet fly fishing, using a combination of two to four flies, would catch White River trout. I do not remember the exact flies I used the first day I used the traditional wet fly method in the White River, but I know I would have used a Wickhams, a Hare's Ear, probably a Silver Invicta, and likely my Muddler Daddy. "Game on" as they say.

Of course, I needed to adapt my procedure to suit the White River when drifting from a boat. In the UK, there is no such thing as float fishing on rivers. Long rods are mandatory, and I use rods of 10 to 11.6 feet generally suited to 4 and 5 wt lines. Lines I use may be a double taper dry, different lines of sinking density, and at times short section sink tips. Flies used are based on conditions, such as water depth and speed, time of the year, whether there is a hatch that brings fish to feed on or near the surface, and so on.

How the team of flies is presented and animated is based on the prevailing conditions at the time, which is also related to how the boat is controlled during the presentation. There are times when the flies are best presented in a dead drift mode.

Traditional wet fly fishing is an acquired skill, which involves a combination of knowledge of fish behavior, knowledge of the river, and choice of flies to use. It also requires skills of knowing how to control the movement of the flies by use of the rod hand and various methods of line control and recovery with the other hand.

At the end of the day, the traditional wet fly approach is a method of fly fishing that gives you a direct contact to your flies like no other approach. This will often produce some very large White River trophy browns, as many of my customers can verify.

OUR WATERS ARE NOT ADEQUATELY PROTECTED

There are two issues. One involves the Corp of Engineers. Do they give a damn about the management of the fishery? Absolutely not. It is not their responsibility. Their responsibility is flood control, and also Southwest Power making money from the generation. Could they do more to help

the quality of the water discharged into the river? You're damned right. But that's not their responsibility.

The other issue relates to Game and Fish management. Could they do more to enhance the quality of the fishery? You're damn right they could. The hatchery at Norfork is mandated to produce 500,000 pounds of fish per year. That is over 1 million trout per year. And that costs the state of Arkansas almost nothing because the hatchery is funded by federal money. Not all of those trout go to the White River. If it was Arkansas money that was being used for the hatchery, I know they would have a very different management policy as related to the fishery.

Catch and release could be instituted in more locations, but that is difficult because of businesses on the river who object to that idea. Out of 100 miles of river there are less than 5 miles of catch and release trophy zone water. And it does tend to get a lot of illegal fishing activity.

I understand both sides of the argument on catch and release. A trout is a fish, period. It is no different from any other species of fish. The fact that you use a fly rod to fish for it, that's a personal choice. But don't think you're one above the other because you're not. You simply choose to fish with a fly rod. You should not be

disparaging to anyone else who chooses to fish by any other means. If you want to go bait fish, that's fine with me. If you want to go spin fish, that's fine with me. The only thing is you need to respect the quarry that you pursue. One unfortunate aspect of fishing is that some types of fishing tend to attract some anglers who don't think that way. If the bait guides would fish with barbless hooks, mortality would be reduced significantly. But they won't do it because the barbless hooks are more expensive.

Could the Game and Fish enhance regulations? Sure. Would they do it? Probably not. They tell us they can't effectively enforce it, which I do not agree with. Unfortunately, the situation is one where we do have trout management program discussions that the public is invited to attend. The appointed biologists then submit the consensus of general opinions and proposals to the commissioners of the Game and Fish Commission. It is them who ultimately determine what proposed regulations will or will not come into effect. We have certainly seen some improvements for minimum size limits for all species in the system. However, the majority of us would like to see more water allocated for catch and release where there would be no bait and the use of barbless hooks only.

Trout Unlimited offered to pay a fair amount of the money that would be needed to employ more people for full-time work on this river to enforce regulations. But Game and Fish would not accept it. That was maybe seven or eight years ago. A lot of the enforcement officers are friends of mine, and I understand the situation. They can only do what their time on the river allows them to do. If I see people on the river who are up to no good, I will call the enforcement officer, and if he is nearby, he will show up. And he will bust their ass.

We used to have a 15 inch minimum for brown trout, but now it's 24 inches. That has definitely increased the number of large browns in the river. That species has a natural ability to survive anyway. But it's harder than hell to catch big rainbows in the White River. Upriver, I have caught them up to 8 pounds in the past. With extended periods of low flow, now those big fish starve to death or move downstream and get caught by the anglers who keep them.

K E E P I N G F I S H

I view stocked rainbow trout as a resource. It's as simple as that. This river has to have harvest based on the number of fish they stock in this river. If there was no harvest in these rivers, fish would starve to death. There is not suffi-

cient food base in that river to support the hundreds of thousands of trout. So, I have no concern whatsoever about people wanting to keep five stocked rainbows. We don't keep browns, and we don't keep cutthroats. I tell my clients that. But it's very few of my clients who want to keep any fish, maybe 2 % .

H O W T O G R O W T R O P H Y R A I N B O W S

You have to get the right zone of water. A lot of the sections of the river have no good structure for trout, and basically, some sections just have hundreds of yards of gravel. And that is almost worthless. But if you would take a good section of water, and protect the fish in that area, then some positive impact could occur. Then the next step would be regulations that increase the survival of the rainbows. Barbless hooks would be required. Bait fishing would not be allowed in these protected zones. There is plenty of river for people to fish however they want to. Give us a little bit more river to protect rainbows to allow them to grow bigger. For each of these protected areas, we need at least 1 mile of river. Unless you have a significant section of water that comes under those regulations, you're wasting your time. And then enforcement is the other issue. There has to be strict enforcement.

The answer to your question is that there could be a lot more done to protect the resource, especially rainbows. The browns are doing pretty well right now, but the rainbows need more protection to allow them to grow bigger. The larger fish are mainly in this upper section of the river because there's more food for them.

IF YOU WANT TO HIRE DAVY WOTTON AS A GUIDE

They can go to my website, which is <davywottonflyfishing.com>. Or they can call me at 870-404-5223.

Events of Interest to NAFF Members

No events scheduled until further notice!